

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 013692

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:ELAB, PINT, SL

SUBJECT:AALC PROBLEMS IN SIERRA LEONE

REF: FREETOWN 0215

1. SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL DISCUSSED WITH PAT O'FARRELL OF AALC. O'FARRELL APPRECIATES AND SUPPORTS THE AMBASSADOR'S SUGGESTION THAT KILHEFNER ACCOMPANY THE AMBASSADOR TO A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT STEVENS FOR A DIRECT DISCUSSION OF AALC PROGRAMS IN SIERRA LEONE.

2. O'FARRELL IS ALSO OF THE OPINION THAT CONTROL OF THE SLLC IS THE REAL GOAL OF STEVENS. HOWEVER, O'FARRELL NOTES THAT CURRENT SLLC LEADERS WERE CHOSEN IN WHAT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN FREE ELECTIONS. THUS, AALC IS RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FROM THE DULY CHOSEN AND LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVES
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OF THE SIERRA LEONE WORKERS. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE AALC IS NOT RPT NOT PREPARED TO DEPART VOLUNTARILY UNLESS SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED TO DO SO BY THE SLLC. SHOULD GOSL PROHIBIT AALC/SLLC RELATIONS, O'FARRELL ANTICIPATES A STRONG AFL-CIO REACTION, PERHAPS FOCUSING ON THE DENIAL OF THE FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AS A VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

3. O'FARRELL REITERATED THAT AALC PROGRAMS ARE UNION-TO-UNION ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES BEGUN AND MAINTAINED AT THE

REQUEST OF NATIONAL UNIONS AND WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, AND FREQUENTLY DIRECT ASSENT, OF HOST GOVERNMENTS. THERE ARE INSTANCES WHERE LABOR MINISTRIES COOPERATE TO SOME EXTENT AND THE AALC HAS FOUND SUCH UNION/MINISTRY COOPERATION USEFUL IN FURTHERING THE AIMS OF SPECIFIC PROGRAMS.

HOWEVER, THE PROGRAMS REMAIN BASICALLY ADMINISTERED BY, FOR AND THROUGH THE TRADE UNIONS. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT AALC WOULD AGREE TO THE TRANSFER OF A TRADE UNION PROGRAM FROM THE UNION TO A GOVERNMENT, IN THIS CASE BY OPERATING DIRECTLY THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR RATHER THAN THE SLLC. THE EMBASSY MAY WISH TO QUERY KILHEFNER AS TO WHAT HE HAD IN MIND. IN THE MEANTIME, IN VIEW OF O'FARRELL'S COMMENTS THE EMBASSY SHOULD NOT RPT NOT SUGGEST OR IMPLY TO GOSL THAT THIS KIND OF SWITCH WOULD BE A REALISTIC ALTERNATIVE TO PRESENT AALC/SLLC COOPERATION. CHRISTOPHER

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